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Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0541
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 1170

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SOPN PROP PBOR EFIS CH US JA
SUBJ: HERB CAEN PRESS DELEGATION MEETS YU CHAN, KENG PIAO

1. SUMMARY. A 13-MEMBER DELEGATION OF AMERICAN WORKING PRESS INCLUDING SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE COLUMNIST HERB CAEN ARRIVED IN PEKING ON APRIL 24 AT THE INVITATION OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS INFORMATION DEPARTMENT. DURING TIGHTLY-SCHEDULED 3 1/2 DAYS IN PEKING, THE GROUP VISITED NCNA AND PEOPLE'S DAILY AND HELD MEETINGS WITH VICE FOREIGN MINISTER YU CHAN AND VICE PREMIER KENG PIAO. SESSIONS WITH KENG PIAO APPARENTLY PRODUCED ADDITIONAL PRC THINKING ON SENKAKUS INCIDENT BUT LITTLE ELSE BEYOND THE STANDARD LINE. END SUMMARY.

2. A 13-MEMBER DELEGATION OF AMERICAN WORKING PRESS INCLUDING SAN FRANCISC COLUMNIST HERB CAEN ARRIVED IN PEKING ON APRIL 24 AT THE INVITATION OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS INFORMATION DEPARTMENT. GROUP IS DRAWN FROM A NUMBER OF CONFIDENTIAL

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CITIES, IS PREDOMINANTLY YOUNG, AND IS CHARACTERIZED BY DIVERSE INTERESTS RATHER THAN SPECIALIZATION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF CHINA. NEVERTHELESS, IN KEEPING WITH PRACTICE INITIATED FOLLOWING AUGUST 1977 VISIT BY SECRETARY VANCE, THE DELEGATION HAS BEEN GIVEN TOP-FLIGHT TREATMENT INCLUDING AN OFF-THE-RECORD SESSION WITH VICE FOREIGN MINISTER (FOR INFORMATION) YU CHAN AND A 2 1/2 HOUR MEETING WITH POLITBURO MEMBER, INTERNATIONAL

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LIAISON DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR, AND VICE PREMIER KENG PIAO.

3. DELEGATION MEMBERS CHARACTEIZED 2-HOUR MEETING WITH YU CHAN ON APRIL 24 (THUS FAR UNREPORTED BY CHINESE MEDIA, IN KEEPING WITH "BACKGROUNDER" CHARACTERIZATION) AND 2 1/2 HOUR MEETING WITH KENG PIAO ON APRIL 26 AS CORDIAL THOUGH NOT ESPECIALLY INFORMATIVE. YU CHAN FOCUSSED ON GLOBAL AFFAIRS, CHASTISING US FOR ITS HANDLING OF DECISION ON PRODUCTION OF NEUTRON BOMB. YU APPARENTLY REFRAINED FROM THE SORT OF ACERBIC AD HOMINEM CRITICISM OF AMERICAN LEADERS FOR WHICH HE HAS BEEN KNOWN IN THE PAST.

4. VICE PREMIER KENG PIAO, WHO HAS EMERGED FOLLOWING THE 5TH NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS AS THE MAIN PRC SPOKESMAN ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, REHASHED HIS EARLIER EXPLANATION OF THE SENKAKUS INCIDENT IN RESPONSE TO A PRESUBMITTED QUESTION. KENG ONCE AGAIN CHARACTERIZED THE ENTRY BY CHINESE FISHING VESSELS INTO DISPUTED WATERS AS "ACCIDENTAL," EXPLAINING THAT IT WAS ALTOGHTHER NATURAL FOR THE SKIPPER OF A FISHING SHIP TO CONTINUE PURSUING A SCHOOL OF FISH. KENG THEN WENT BEYOND HIS EARLIER STATEMENT TO A JAPANESE DELEGATION ON THE MATTER, COMMENTING THAT HE CONSIDERED THE INCIDENT TO HAVE BEEN INTENTIONALLY INFLATED BY JAPANESE POLITICIANS WHO WERE SEEKING AN EXCUSE FOR FAILURE TO CONCLUDE A PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP TRATY WITH PEKING. THIS DESIRE NOT TO SIGN THE PFT WAS ATTRIBUTED BY KENG TO FEAR OF ADVERSE SOVIET
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REACTION; IN SHORT IT CONSTITUTED BOWING BEFORE SOVIET PRESSURE. KENG THEN REITERATED THAT THE CHINESE SIDE WAS PREPARED TO SET ASIDE THE SENKAKUS ISSUE IN NEGOTIATION OF THE PFT, AS HAD BEEN AGREED WITH PRIME MINISTER TANAKA SEVEN YEARS EARLIER.

5. KENG DELIVERED THE STANDARD PRC LINE ON OTHER ISSUES INCLUDING SINO-US RELATIONS. HE PROVIDED AN UNSOLICITED -- AND EXTENDED -- RESUME OF PROLEMS CAUSED BY THE GANG OF FOUR.

6. THE DELEGATION DEPARTS FOR NANKING AND SHANGHAI ON THE EVENING OF APRIL 27. ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON THE GROUP'S TALKS WILL BE REPORTED IF THEY BECOME AVAILABLE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: THE PRESS, VISITS, FISHING BOATS, FISHING DISPUTES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978PEKING01170
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780180-0270
Format: TEL
From: PEKING
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780410/aaaaahnc.tel
Line Count: 108
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Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2813925
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HERB CAEN PRESS DELEGATION MEETS YU CHAN, KENG PIAO
TAGS: SOPN, PROP, PBOR, EFIS, CH, US, JA, (CAEN, HERB)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/573db2a5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
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